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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8140
INFO RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2673
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0861
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 0626
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 24596

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, SY, GE
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER TRAVELS TO MIDDLE EAST

REF: A) BONN 21933, B) DAMASCUS 04969

1. (CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: FRG FOREIGN MINISTER WILL TRAVEL TO SYRIA, KUWAIT, AND EGYPT AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 3. (HE WILL MAKE OTHER MID-EAST TRIPS IN OCTOBER AND POSSIBLY IN NOVEMBER.) IN DAMASCUS, GENSCHER WILL SEEK TO ENCOURAGE SYRIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PEACE PROCESS. THE KUWAIT STOP RESPONDS TO A LONGSTANDING INVITATION. IN CAIRO,

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GENSCHER WILL BE LOOKING FOR ASSESSMENTS OF REGIONAL ISSUES AND INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS AND DISCUSSING BILATERAL ISSUES SUCH AS AID AND GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN EGYPTIAN NUCLEAR POWER DEVELOPMENT. IT MAY BE WORTH ASKING THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO PURSUE THE TERRORISM ISSUE DURING HIS TALKS IN DAMASCUS. END SUMMARY.

3. FRG FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER WILL TRAVEL TO THE MIDDLE EAST FROM AUGUST 30 TO SEPTEMBER 3. STOPS WILL INCLUDE SYRIA, KUWAIT, AND EGYPT. ON AUGUST 16, FOREIGN OFFICE DIRECTOR FOR NEAR EAST AFFAIRS RICHTER TOLD EMBOFF THAT GENSCHER WILL ALSO ACCOMPANY FEDERAL PRESIDENT VON WEIZSAECKER ON A STATE VISIT TO ISRAEL (OCTOBER 8-11) AND MAY TRAVEL TO OMAN AND YEMEN IN NOVEMBER.

4. THE GENERAL PURPOSE OF GENSCHER'S MUCH-POSTPONED TRIP TO DAMASCUS DERIVES FROM THE PERSISTENT GERMAN BELIEF THAT SYRIAN PARTICIPATION IS ESSENTIAL TO CONCLUSION OF A MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT. THE FRG, RICHTER REPEATED, SEEKS THROUGH WESTERN CONTACT TO PREVENT SYRIAN ISOLATION, A CIRCUMSTANCE IT FEELS COULD ONLY COMPLICATE THE PEACE PROCESS AND PUSH THE SYRIANS FURTHER TOWARD THE SOVIETS. CONVERSELY, CONTACT WITH NATIONS LIKE THE FRG MIGHT HELP DRAW SYRIA INTO A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WEST AND IMPROVE CHANCES FOR A PEACE SETTLEMENT. THE GERMANS, RICHTER EMPHASIZED, HAVE A REALISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHANCES FOR A SHIFT IN SYRIAN VIEWS, BUT GENSCHER BELIEVED THE VISIT WAS "WORTH A TRY."

5. RICHTER POINTED OUT THAT THE MID-JULY RESUMPTION OF FRG AID TO SYRIA AFTER A FIVE YEAR HIATUS (REF A) WAS ALSO "PART OF THE GAME" TO INFLUENCE THE SYRIANS POSITIVELY. ADDITIONALLY, HE CONCEDED, IT HELPED PREPARE THE WAY FOR GENSCHER'S VISIT. HE HASTENED TO ADD THAT THE RESUMPTION INCLUDED ONLY AID ALREADY IN THE PIPELINE AND INVOLVED NO NEW MONEY.

6. THE STOP IN KUWAIT, RICHTER SAID, WAS SIMPLY A RESPONSE TO A LONGSTANDING INVITATION. GENSCHER WAS, HOWEVER, ATTRACTED TO THE IDEA OF SOME KIND OF REGIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE GULF STATES AND THE EC (ALONG THE

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